



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part ”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 6

Genesis 16:3-4

3 Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.

4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress [Sarai] became despised in her eyes.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

Objective Versus Subjective

We need to clearly understand the two concepts of objective and subjective to be able to develop the mind of Christ. The definition of a subjective decision is one to which we come to indulge our feelings, to either make ourselves feel better about something or to give ourselves something that we desire. I suppose that the example of a subjective conclusion of which we have spoken the most is the conclusion of the woman in the garden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If we read the first six verses of Genesis chapter 3, we will clearly see that the woman was aware of the poisonous nature of the tree. We will also see, however, that despite God's warning about death, the woman desired to eat the fruit of the tree. The temptation of the serpent gave the woman a rationale to do that which she wished to do in the first place. The serpent was not responsible for the woman's decision, but rather, the responsibility was that of the woman. Subjective conclusions are those to which we come because of our personal desires.

On the other hand, an objective decision is one to which we come based upon the stated desires of God. In the Bible, God makes His desires known to us. In the moral laws as codified by the Ten Commandments, God tells us that it is wrong of us to murder each other. Objectively then, murdering someone can never be correct, regardless of how much we may feel that we are provoked to murder someone, because disobeying God's commands is objectively incorrect.

Obtaining the mind of Jesus Christ is a pursuit of objectivity, the desire to do the objective will of God. In the Garden of Gethsemane, in **Matthew 26:39, 42:**

39 [Jesus] went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O



My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

42 Again, a second time, [Jesus] went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

The cup of which Jesus is speaking is His Crucifixion on the Cross of Calvary. The second clause of **Matthew 26:39** is a subjective request. By saying, **“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me;”** Jesus is telling His Father that which He wants to do based upon His feelings. The Lord Jesus Christ does not desire the agony of the Crucifixion, regardless of the benevolent nature of the cause that leads Him to give His life. But the third clause of the **Matthew 26:39**, **“nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will”**, indicates that Jesus is willing to yield His subjective desire and do that which is in the objective will of God, His Father. Jesus then reiterates His willingness to do that which God objectively wants Him to do in spite of His personal desire to the contrary as He says, **O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.**

When we say that we want to obtain the mind of Christ, we are simply saying that we want to develop the ability to endure the discipline of complying with the objective will of God. That discipline, like the experience of the Cross, may be painful for us, but to be godly, we have to persevere through the pain to reach the objective, as did Jesus. **Hebrews 12:11** tells us:

11 Now no [discipline] seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

The Oneness of Husband and Wife

Our takeaway point in this series on the Biblical Design of Gender is that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in our eternal life.

In our last lesson, we discussed the episode of Abram, Sarai and the Egyptian Pharaoh in which Abram tried to give Sarai to the Pharaoh. Abram's rationalization was that he was afraid that the Pharaoh would try to kill him to illicitly take his beautiful wife but, in my opinion, that was just an excuse. Abram really wanted the Pharaoh to take Sarai because Sarai could not produce children, and Sarai was willing to go along with the Abram's plan because she was tired of being constantly reminded that she was the one woman in the camp that did not give her husband children. After Abram proposed that Sarai conceal her marital status from the Pharaoh, it was clear to her that Abram wanted a



change in their marital situation. But when God thwarted Abram's plan to give Sarai to the Pharaoh, Sarai developed a plan to fix her infertility problem. In

Genesis 16:2:

2 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

Hagar, Sarai's maid, was not Sarai's employee, but was actually Sarai's Egyptian slave. Sarai rationalized that since Abram was her husband, and Hagar was her slave, she could easily adopt the offspring that Abram and Hagar produced, and Abram's obligation to produce a child would be complete. But Sarai's plan was flawed, because God objectively instructs us, in **Genesis 2:24**, that men and their wives should have an exclusive marital sexual relationship with each other. The Bible says:

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

The reason for God's objective admonition that husbands and wives have an exclusive sexual relationship with one another is for the proper raising and protection of children. God gives us the commandment of marriage so that no child will be born to parents that are not related to one another, not committed to one another, and that have not formed a cooperative coalition to parent the child.

Reason for Oneness: Raising Children

Children require dedicated cooperative parental supervision for an extended period of time, which we call childhood and adolescence, to develop into adults. Formal education is the factor that determines the length of adolescence. In an agricultural society, children may actually skip adolescence and be considered mature as soon as they complete their childhood because may be no provision for formal education after elementary school. When my Dad was a child, many of his peers married and began their families at age fourteen or fifteen, because many Black children in his area did not go to high school. They went to work in agricultural jobs after eighth grade.

In our time, fourteen year old children are no less physically mature than they were in Dad's day, but there are virtually no married fourteen or fifteen year olds, because almost all adolescents go to high school until they are eighteen. Many delay their adolescence to the age of twenty-two, because their parents provide them a four year college education after they complete high school. An offspring of legal adult age is still functionally an adolescent until they can provide for themselves financially. Children in our society are best served by the guidance and financial support of a mature, committed, married mother and father for at least eighteen, and maybe as many as twenty-two years, and marriage is the institution that God has ordained to fulfill that need. For both the



children and the adults, parenting is a major element of the process of developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in our eternal life.

Sexual relationships outside of marriage do not provide the same protection for offspring that the committed relationship of marriage provides. People that marry make formal and legal commitments to one another. The key word in the last sentence is the word commitment. In our society, once a person legally commits themselves to a spouse, they legally obligate themselves to the other person and to any children that they bring into the world as a result of their union. They cannot legally take another spouse or abandon their children, regardless of any subjective or circumstantial desire that they may have to do so.

Feelings fluctuate with hormone levels, moods, situational stresses, and the like. Commitments, however, do not fluctuate, and a mature person recognizes his responsibility to fulfill his commitment whether or not he receives immediate gratification from doing so, just as Jesus went to the Cross without wanting to do so. Commitments are the “bridge over troubled water” that bonds people together, makes them into a family and gives them the structure for raising children.

A Husband's Need for Oneness With His Wife

Although Abram wanted a child that Sarai could not bear, Abram did not initiate any polygamous relationships. Sarai, however, proposed that they use the extraordinary measure of a surrogate mother to obtain a genetically related child. In our day, people use extraordinary measures such as artificial insemination, surrogate parenting, and sperm and egg donation, to obtain a child. Sarai's method was not as technically advanced as the methods that we use, but it was effective. However, there were side effects, as **Genesis 16:3-4** tells us: **Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.**

4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when [Hagar] saw that she had conceived, her mistress [Sarai] became despised in her eyes.

Genesis 16:3 refers to Hagar as Abram's wife. Hagar, being Sarai's maid, was part of Abram and Sarai's household. Abram's sexual relations with Hagar were not recreational, but part of a deliberate attempt to produce a child. This elevated Hagar's status beyond that of a woman having sex for frivolous fun or for a financial consideration to that of a wife.

Once the child was conceived, Hagar thought that she would be Abram's focus more than Sarai, because, although Sarai was Abram's legal wife, she was the mother of his child. Abram could support two women, but had Abram had to pick one of his women to support, Hagar reasoned that Abram would have to



choose her, because of her pregnancy. When Hagar decided that she had the influence that went with being the pregnant wife of the chief of the tribe, she disregarded the fact that Sarai was Abram's real wife. In Hagar's mind, she was the wife, and Sarai was the servant. **Proverbs 30:21-23** tells us:

**21 For three things the earth is perturbed, Yes, for four it cannot bear up:
22 For a servant when he reigns, A fool when he is filled with food,
23 A hateful woman when she is married, And a maidservant who succeeds her mistress.**

Hagar became, in her mind, a maidservant who succeeds her mistress. But Hagar forgot to take some things about her situation into account. First of all, Sarai had been Abram's wife for many years, and pillow talk and facing the problems of life together for an extended period of time created a strong bond between them. Secondly, Sarai was actually Abram's half-sister. Abram and Sarai shared extended family while Hagar was a slave of a different race. Thirdly, Hagar was Sarai's choice to carry the child, not Abram's. Abram was not actually invested in Hagar. **Genesis 2:24** tells us:

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

The wife with whom Abram left his father and mother was Sarai, and Abram considered Hagar a temporary means to an end. Abram planned to have Sarai adopt the child that Hagar produced, and Hagar was to initially be a surrogate mother, then a wet nurse, and then, gradually, Hagar was to return to her original position in the household as Sarai's maid. Hagar, as birth mother, would have a somewhat elevated status in the household, but she was not in line to replace Sarai in Abram's affections.

Hagar miscalculated her importance in the greater scheme of things, as the other woman often does when she challenges the incumbent wife. A man that takes a mistress generally does so for a specific reason, as did Abram. But most men that cheat can be seduced back into their marriage by their original wives, if the wives choose to do so.

A Husband's Need for the Emotional Support of His Wife

A man marries a woman to have an emotionally satisfying relationship and a comfortable, regular sexual partner. At their wedding, he commits his resources to her, while she commits her ability to comfort and excite him to him. This is the mutual commitment of marriage.

The man, generally speaking, has an objective commitment. I obtained a job with Michigan Bell on December 27th, 1972 because Marie and I were to be married on Saturday, December 30, 1972, and I had rented an apartment for us to live in. I needed a job to pay the rent, because Marie was in school full-time



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and couldn't work. Since I was the man, it was my responsibility to make the money.

When I obtained the job, I was ordered to be in Grand Rapids, Michigan on Tuesday, January 2nd, 1973 for sixteen weeks of training, after which I was to work in the Grand Rapids central office. My permanent job was to work in the Lansing Central Office, but the office was not scheduled to go into service until 1974, so I would be on loan to various Central offices around the state until there was actually work for me to do in Lansing.

My part in the marriage was objective. I agreed to go to work, bring the money home, and buy things for my wife that we needed and wanted.

Now, my wife's part in the marriage was more subjective. Her job was to make me happy. That is a much less objective specification than one receives on the job. But let me define that which men need:

- A man needs to feel strong and needed as a protector for women—basically, to conquer the beast and rescue the fair maiden.
- A man wants his woman to make him feel that he is strong and the head of the household. I am not talking caveman-style, dragging the woman around by her hair, but just as the leader of the family.
- A man wants respect, kindness, and love from his woman.
- A man wants to be put on a pedestal, not so that he can look down on everyone, but to show him that he is the most important thing to his woman.
- A man needs his woman to show him that she needs his strength to help her through life.
- A man needs enthusiastic approval, appreciation, and respect from his wife for being a competent man, husband, and father.
- A man needs his wife to show some interest in his interests, especially when it's an activity she may not "get" or like. Just being there is important.
- A man needs his wife to greet him after work with love and enthusiasm.
- A man needs his wife to care about the day he's had.
- A man needs to know that his wife is sexually satisfied by him.
- A man needs his wife's encouragement in order to be a man.

Women turn to their mothers, their friends, their neighbors, their coworkers, their relatives, their shrinks, their hairdressers, their manicurists, and most media to get validation—earned or not. Because of this willingness to solicit support from the far corners of their personal universes, women in general rely less on their husbands' approval than men. Men gossip less about relationships than women; they are more private. By and large, men tend to get a sense of



approval from their success at work and from their wives' happiness. That makes wives more accountable for their husband's well-being than wives may like to be. Talking to a grown man, the father of your children and the major financial supporter of your family, in that "mother tone," as though he were a naughty or irresponsible child, is in direct opposition to his wanting to have a wife and family who are in awe of him for who he is and what he does for them.

I was in Lowe's yesterday, because my wife asked me to buy some plastic tubing so that she could make a toy for her dog. You know, that dog that she loves so dearly. I found the tubing on a large roll, which required an associate to cut and price the tubing for me. When I got to the car, I realized that the tubing that I bought was too narrow, and I went back to get a different diameter.

When I went back to the tubing aisle, I said to the guy, "I bought that tubing that you cut, but I know that my wife will probably want it in a larger diameter. Give me ten feet of this larger tubing."

"Yeah", he said, "it's smart to make sure that you get the right thing. You don't want to hear the complaining that you hear if you get the wrong thing." I then listened to him talk for five or ten minutes about arguments that he had after he went to the store to get something for his wife and she ungratefully complained because he did not bring her exactly what she wanted, as though a grown man can't make a decision about something for his own house. Of course, the obvious way to stop the complaining would be for him to send his wife to the store to get exactly what she wants for herself. In my house, however, it is my job to get my wife the raw materials and her job to turn that which I get into something beautiful. So I make a list of what she wants, write down the specifications, and get that which she wants, which makes us both happy.

Happily married men may have a one-night stand because of immaturity and a temporary lack of judgment (and regret it later), but happily married men seldom initiate or are involved in an affair.

Affairs start and are fueled by something missing in the marriage—and it generally isn't sex! The affairs about which I have known started with a frustrated man that lacks the emotional support of his wife, who, because she has so many emotional outlets, doesn't understand that she is her husband's primary source of emotional support.

A man that is emotionally unsupported by his wife generally becomes sad, and a sad man usually isn't alone long. Another woman will come by to cheer him up. Then comes the affair. Then come the wife's tears about how *she's* been wronged and *her* feelings are hurt.

Paul Newman, the actor, was married to his wife for fifty years before he died in September of 2008. Although Paul Newman was one of Hollywood's most successful leading men, with willing starlets available for sexual trysts, and married men all around him having affairs, divorcing and remarrying, Paul maintained his marital commitment, staying with his wife faithfully for fifty years



before he died. Was Paul Newman some sort of superman of marriage or a paragon of virtue? Not really. When asked, Paul Newman had a simple explanation for his fidelity. He said, "I have steak at home; why go out for hamburger?"

Men, the majority of whom are not psychopaths or narcissists, can be easily satisfied by one woman, because that is the design of God. My wife and I were at the dance on Friday night, and a young woman who was not an experienced ballroom dancer was sitting at the table next to us. When the DJ played a certain hustle, which she did know how to do, she went to the floor in front of us and began doing the hustle in a most, shall I say, attractive, way. One of the more experienced unattached male dancers that we know noticed from across the room, walked all the way across the dance floor and sat right in front of her to watch the show. The fellow that was videotaping the dance noticed, and turned to tape her from a distance. She got to be too much for him, so he walked over and stood right in front of her and pointed his video camera directly at the more suggestively synchronized parts of her rotating anatomy. On the very next song after the hustle finished, the oldest guy at the dance came over to dance with her, although she had not been dancing for most of the dance because of her obvious inexperience. After him, she ended up getting about a fifteen minute personalized dance lesson from one of the most experienced guys who danced with her for four records in a row.

I was sitting there amusedly watching the whole thing, but I never took my arms from around my wife. After the young woman and the fellow danced the fourth record, she sat down, the DJ played something to which my wife wanted to dance, and we went onto the floor. I saw the young woman watching my wife the same way that the fellows were watching her, because, she, like most of the young women, would love to have a permanent partner with whom to dance on any record that they chose that would just sit with them when they don't feel like dancing, like I do with my wife.

Although other women that don't know us give me the eye, I only dance with my wife, because I know that the plan of God is that I can enjoy my permanent relationship with my wife more intensely than any temporary relationship with anyone else. Not only that, but, "I have steak at home; why go out for hamburger?"

The Oneness of Abram's selection

Although Sarai could not give Abram children, she gave Abram everything else that I mentioned on my list. Abram wanted Hagar's child, but Abram also wanted the best of both worlds, which meant that he wanted Sarai for her proven ability to be a wife rather than Hagar the maid. Abram was not committed to



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Hagar, and was willing to sacrifice Hagar to make Sarai happy. **Genesis 16:5-6** records:

5 Then Sarai said to Abram, “My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me.”

6 So Abram said to Sarai, “Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please.” And when Sarai dealt harshly with [Hagar], [Hagar] fled from [Sarai’s] presence.

After Abram let Hagar and the child go for Sarai’s sake, the Lord once again intervened to correct the situation. **Genesis 16:7-10** tells us:

7 Now the Angel of the LORD found [Hagar] by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

8 And He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?” She said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”

9 The Angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand.”

10 Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, “I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude.”

Hagar went back and became Sarai’s submissive maid once again.

Genesis 16:15 records:

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

In the final analysis, the Biblical example of the wife that the husband loves is not the attractively rotating young woman, or the fertile Hagar, but Sarai, as **1Peter 3:3-6** says to young women of all ages:

3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—

4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Once we are saved, we need to develop our ability to objectively submit to the will of the one that has the charge over us. Just as Sarai submitted to Abram, Jesus submitted His will to the will of God, and died on the Cross that our sins might be forgiven. So, let us remember these examples, the reason for our sexuality, our marital commitments and the method of having satisfying marital relationships. Finally, let us also remember the admonition of Jesus Christ, in **John 13:34-35**:



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34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

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